

ADDRESS, JUNIOR WOMAN'S CLUB
TOWSON

October 7, 1963

Mrs. Conway, members of the Junior Woman's Club and guests from the other women's clubs of this area:

Let me, first of all, express my gratitude to you for inviting me here this evening and offering me the opportunity to discuss with you the challenging subject of mental health. Your club is to be commended most highly for its concern with the problems of mental illness. The active support of groups such as this has been an important factor in the progress we have made in caring for the mentally ill, and those of us in government who bear the heaviest responsibility for the success or failure of our program are indebted to you greatly for your interest and your assistance.

In the light of the standards of our times, the history of the care and treatment of the mentally ill, here and elsewhere, is not a very inspiring one. Nonetheless, it had its bright spots, and we in Maryland can claim a few of them. For example, Maryland was among the first of the American states to recognize its responsibility to care for the mentally ill. A hospital for the insane was established in Baltimore in 1797. This institution became Spring Grove State Hospital when it moved to its present location in 1872 with 112 patients. It is the third oldest mental hospital in the United States, younger by a few years than one in Pennsylvania and another in Virginia. As early as 1878, this hospital discarded the conventional restraints of the times and announced that it was prescribing for its patients "sunshine, fresh air and freedom." An idea that was very far advanced for the time and one that has echoed through better years.

Citizens organizations, predecessors of the tremendously effective ones we have today, began showing up in the early years of this century, under the leadership of such persons as Dr. Clifford Beers and Dr. Adolf Meyer. During the period in which our country became involved in two world wars, with an intervening period of severe depression, Maryland's program of mental health lagged. Public opinion was sharply aroused by what was referred to at the time as "Maryland's shame," and the Governor and the Legislature, strongly supported by organizations such as yours, embarked upon a bold and dramatic new program for the mental health of its people. Since that time, your State has spent more than \$50 million on hospital build-